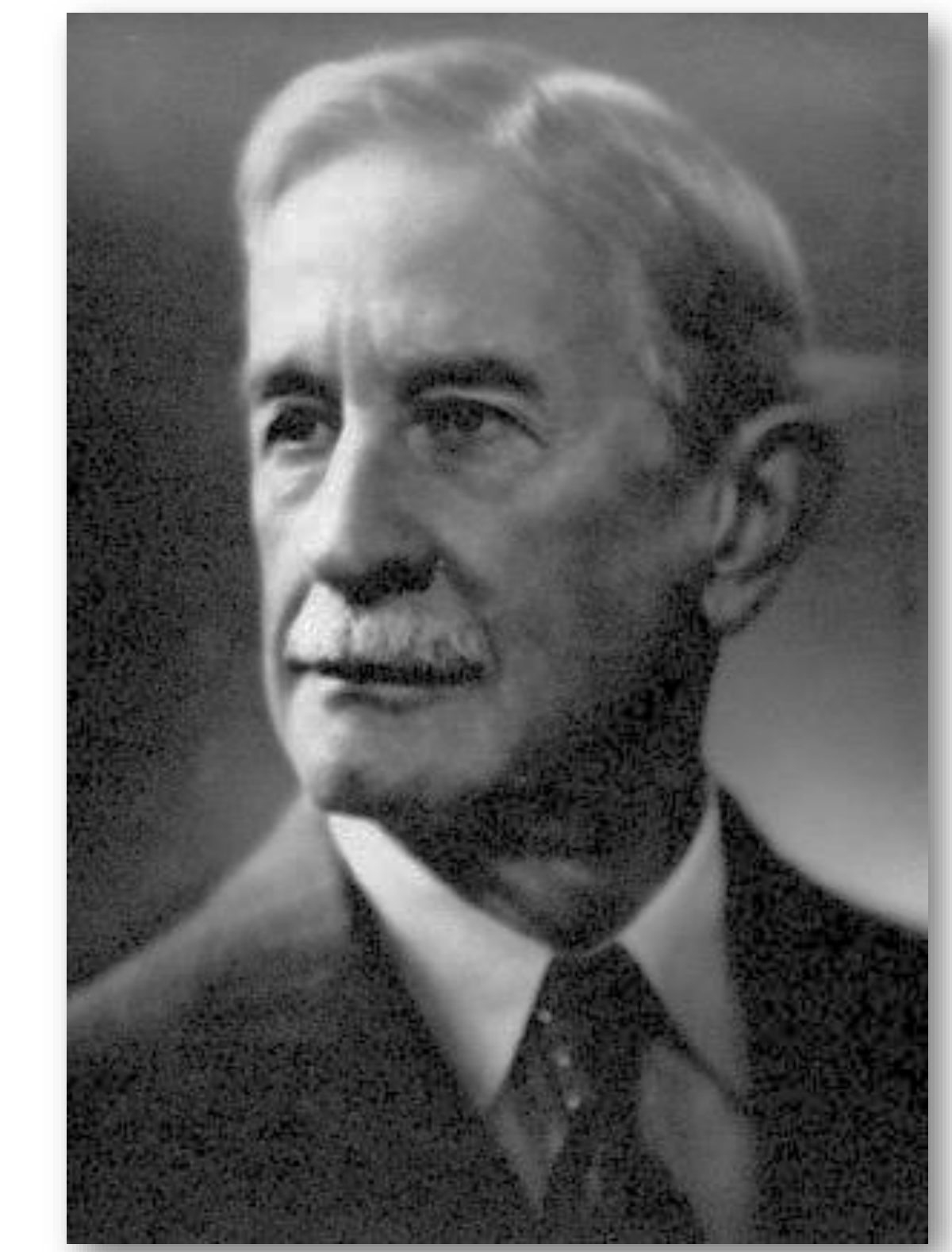


Coker's *Lactarius* taxa: 100 years later

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Dr. William Chambers Coker
24 Oct 1872 – 26 Jun 1953
Photograph source: herbarium.unc.edu

Dr. William Chambers Coker described over 100 new species of fungi during his career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Included in these were seven species and two forms in the genus *Lactarius* published by Coker in *The Lactarias of North Carolina* in 1918. Coker's seven *Lactarius* species have stood the test of time, six at the species level, now spread across three genera (*Lactarius*, *Lactifluus*, and *Multifurca*) and one at varietal rank. As yet, his two forms have not been deemed suitable for taxonomic recognition.

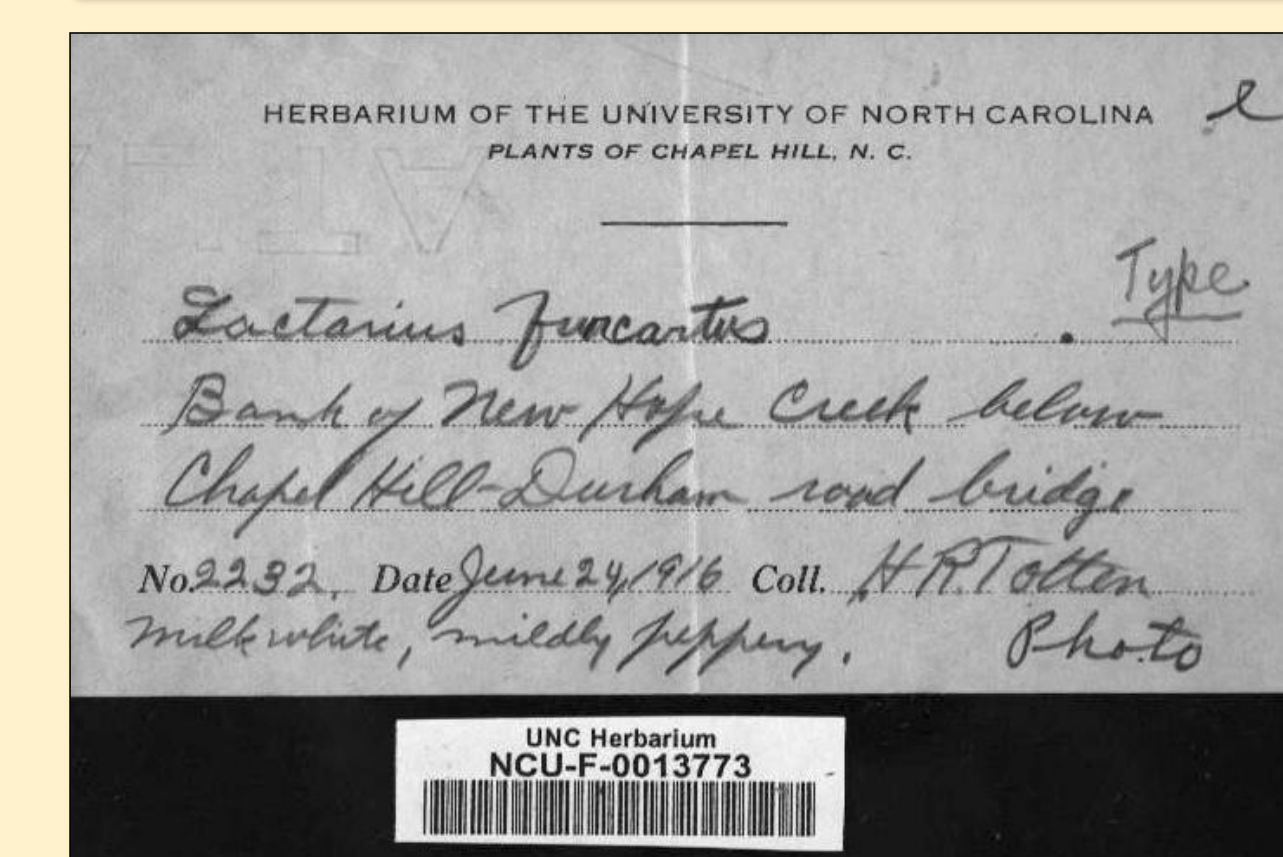
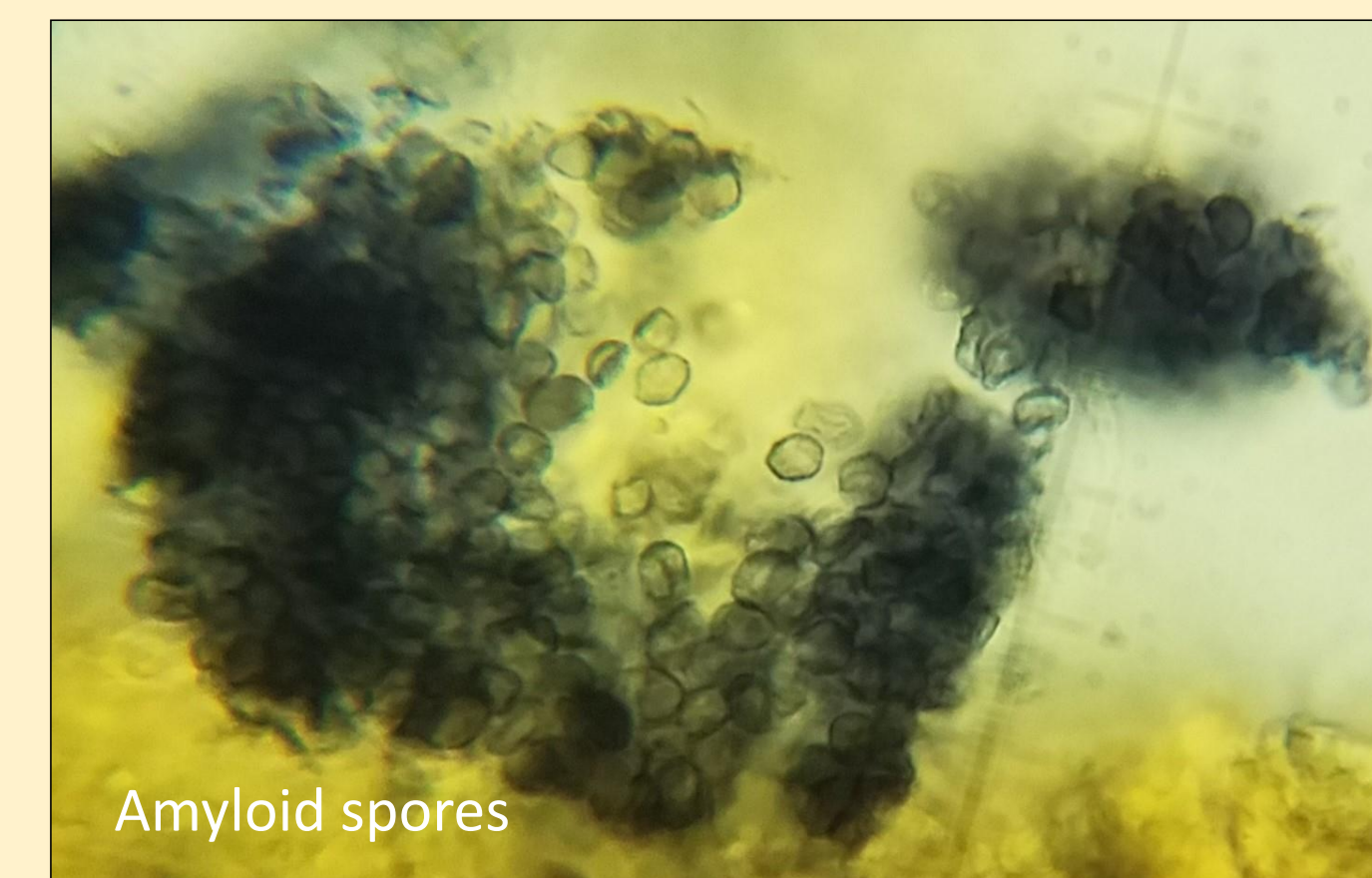
The *Lactarius sensu lato* collection of the University of North Carolina Herbarium (NCU) is the third largest in the southeastern United States, holding 456 preserved specimens representing 76 species. Of these specimens, 42 are type collections.

Six of seven Coker species stand; a seventh reduced to varietal rank.

Coker's Taxon (1918)	Fate of Taxon	Current Name (2019)	Range	Comments
<i>Lactarius allardii</i>	Species stands, transferred to different genus	<i>Lactifluus allardii</i> (Coker) De Crop	NS to FL, TX	Commonly collected. Patronym honors Harry Ardell Allard (1880-1963), Coker's first botany assistant, later known for his research on the tobacco mosaic virus and photoperiodism in vascular plants.
<i>Lactarius coleopteris</i>	Species stands	<i>Lactarius coleopteris</i> Coker	Durham and Orange Cos., NC	Known only from Coker's and H.R. Totten's collections.
<i>Lactarius curtisii</i>	Species reduced to varietal rank	<i>Lactarius salmoneus</i> Peck var. <i>curtisii</i> (Coker) Hesler & A.H. Sm.	NC to FL, TX	Occasionally collected. Patronym honors Rev. Moses Ashley Curtis (1808-1872), whom Coker believed had collected this taxon. Hesler & Smith identified Curtis' collection as <i>L. salmoneus</i> var. <i>salmoneus</i> (1).
<i>Lactarius furcatus</i>	Species stands, transferred to different genus	<i>Multifurca furcata</i> (Coker) Buyck & V. Hofstetter	WV, NC, MS, TX, AR	Occasionally collected. Recent molecular studies suggest specimens collected in Costa Rica are <i>M. mesoamericana</i> . Collections examined molecularly did not include collections from WV and NC (2)
<i>Lactarius lentus</i>	Species stands	<i>Lactarius lentus</i> Coker	Orange Co., NC and Cuyahoga Co., OH	Known only from Coker's collections.
<i>Lactarius subplinthogalus</i>	Species stands	<i>Lactarius subplinthogalus</i> Coker	NY to TX; MI and IA	Commonly collected. Offspring: <i>Lactarius subplinthogalus</i> var. <i>chiangmaiensis</i> H.T. Le & D. Stubbe, Fungal Diversity 27(1): 78 (2007).
<i>Lactarius subterminosus</i>	Species stands	<i>Lactarius subterminosus</i> Coker	Orange Co., NC and Lac Ste. Anne Co., AB	Rarely collected.

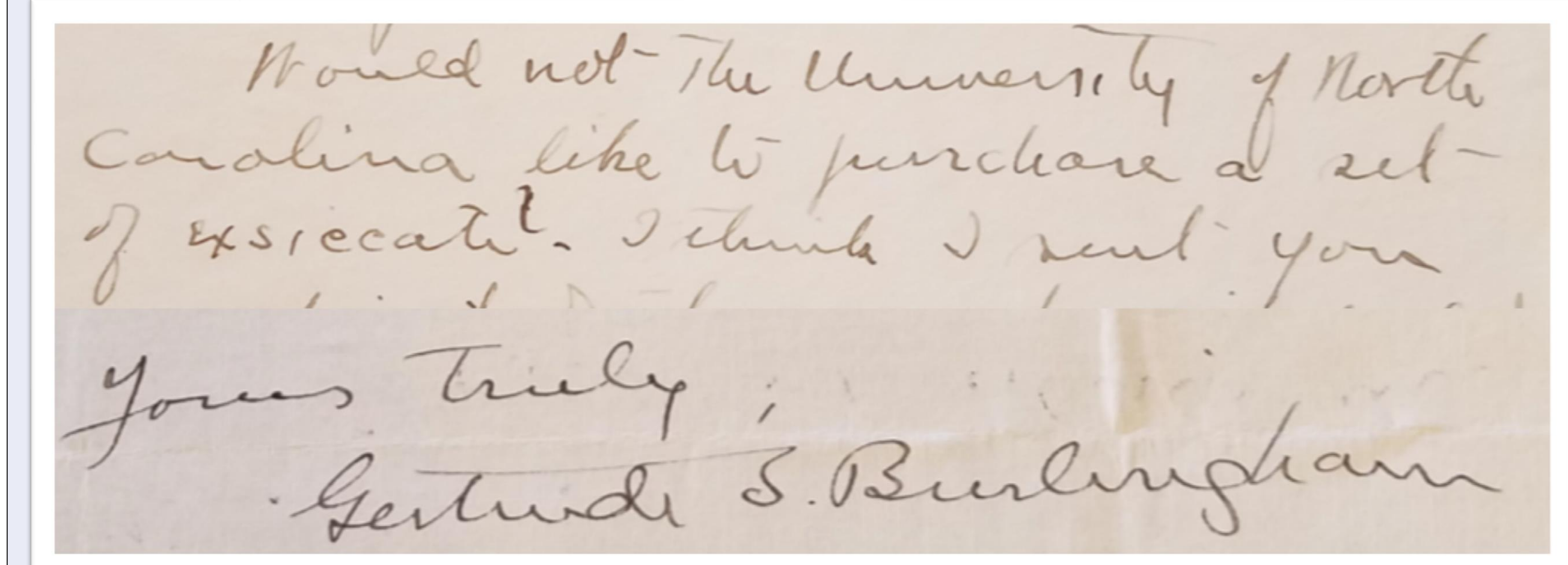
Rediscovery of *Lactarius furcatus* Coker holotype now *Multifurca furcata* (Coker) Buyck & V. Hofstetter (2008)

This holotype was examined by Hesler and Smith for their 1979 monograph. Later it was thought missing (3,4). Now relocated at NCU, the holotype is good condition, and an attempt will be made to determine its ITS barcode. This collection was made on 24 June 1916 by Dr. Henry Roland Totten (1892-1974) in Durham County, NC. Totten collected 115 of NCU's *Lactarius* specimens, including 21 type collections.

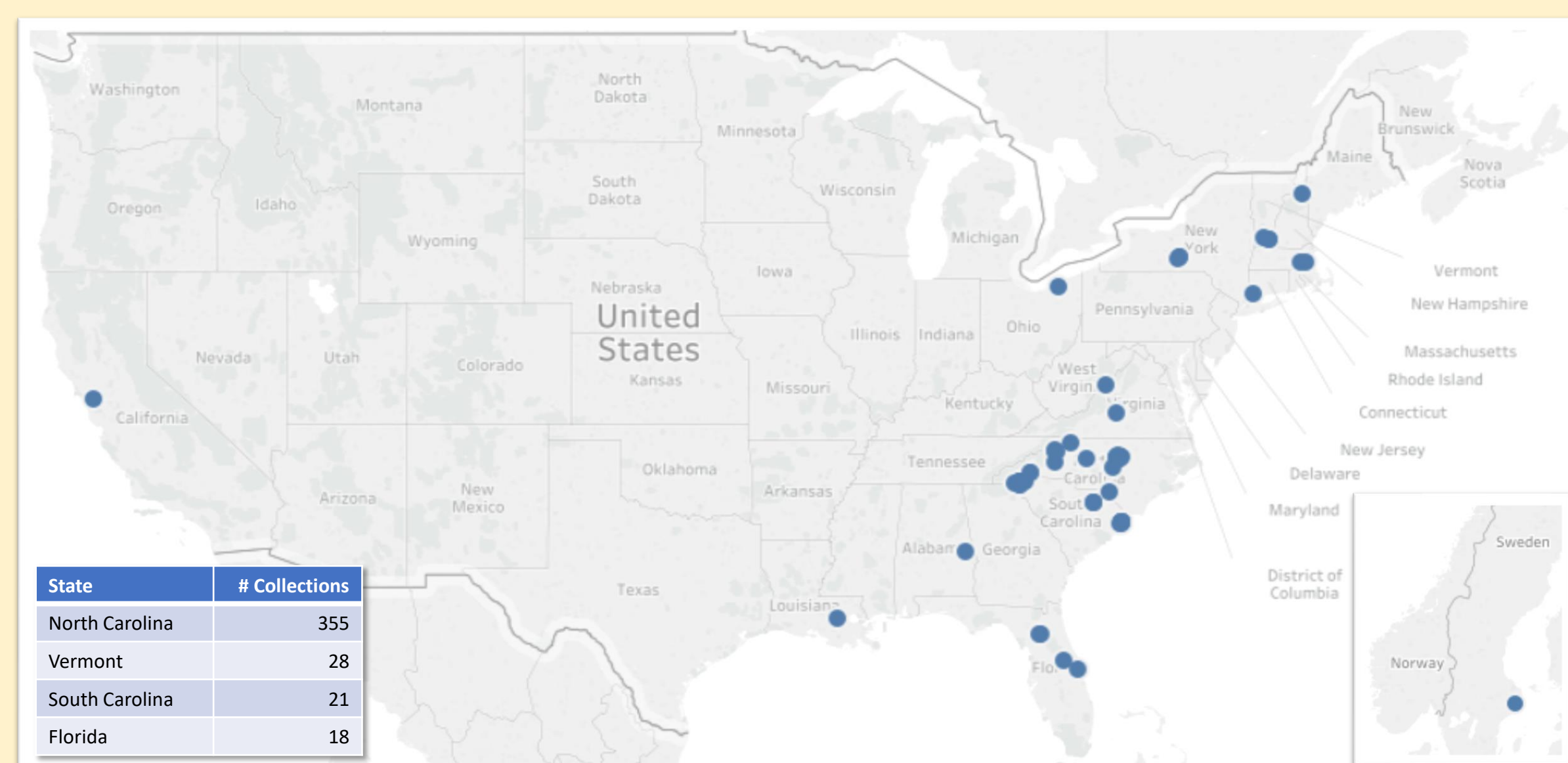


Burlingham's *exsiccati*

Dr. Gertrude Simmons Burlingham (1872-1952) was the United States' foremost authority on Russulaceae during the first half of the twentieth century. Her *exsiccati*, *The Lactariae of North America, Fascicles I-II*, included 50 species (5), which Coker purchased for \$8 at her suggestion in 1916 (6). As a gift, Burlingham included two additional specimens: *L. delicatus* Burl. and *L. lanuginosus* Burl. collected by her in 1907 in Transylvania County, NC. In the introduction to *Lactarias of North Carolina* (1918), Coker expresses gratitude for Burlingham's "help in determining a considerable number of [his] most puzzling collections" (7). NCU retains Burlingham's full *exsiccati*, and, based on MyCoPortal records, is the only repository with this distinction.



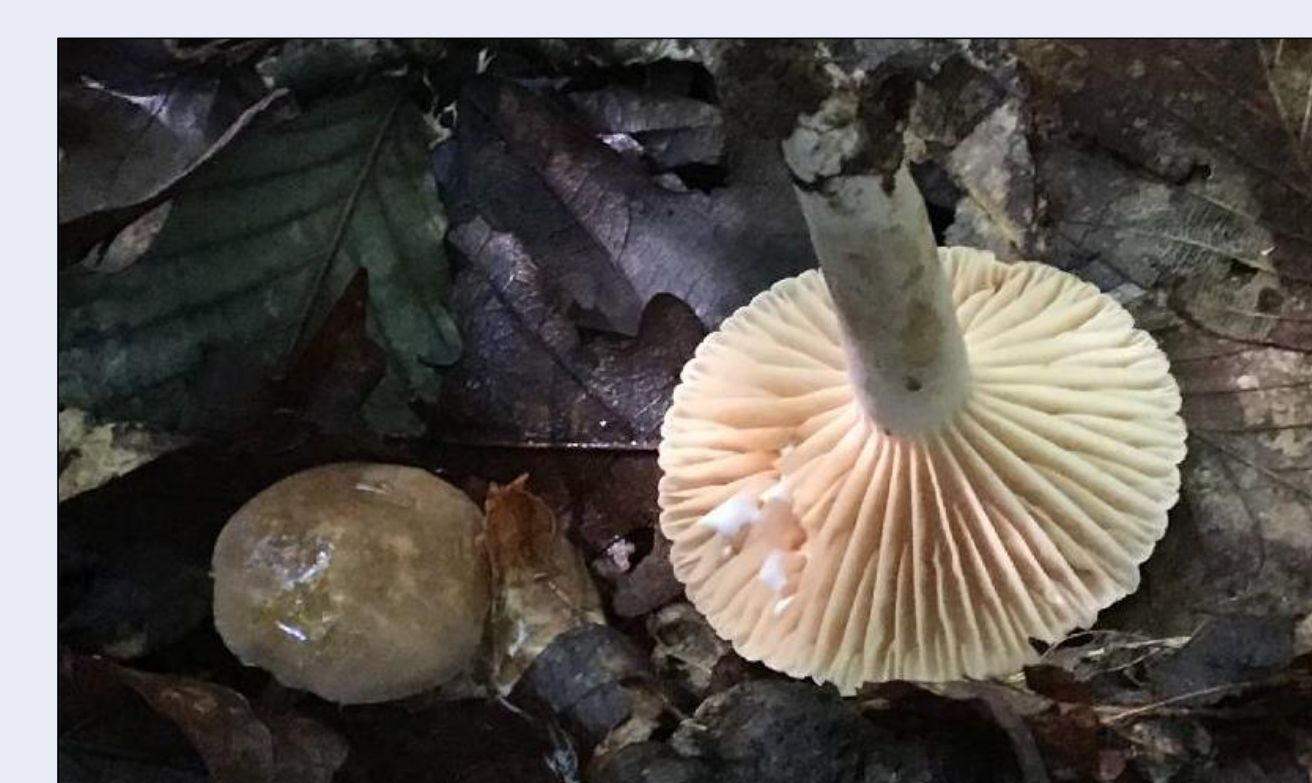
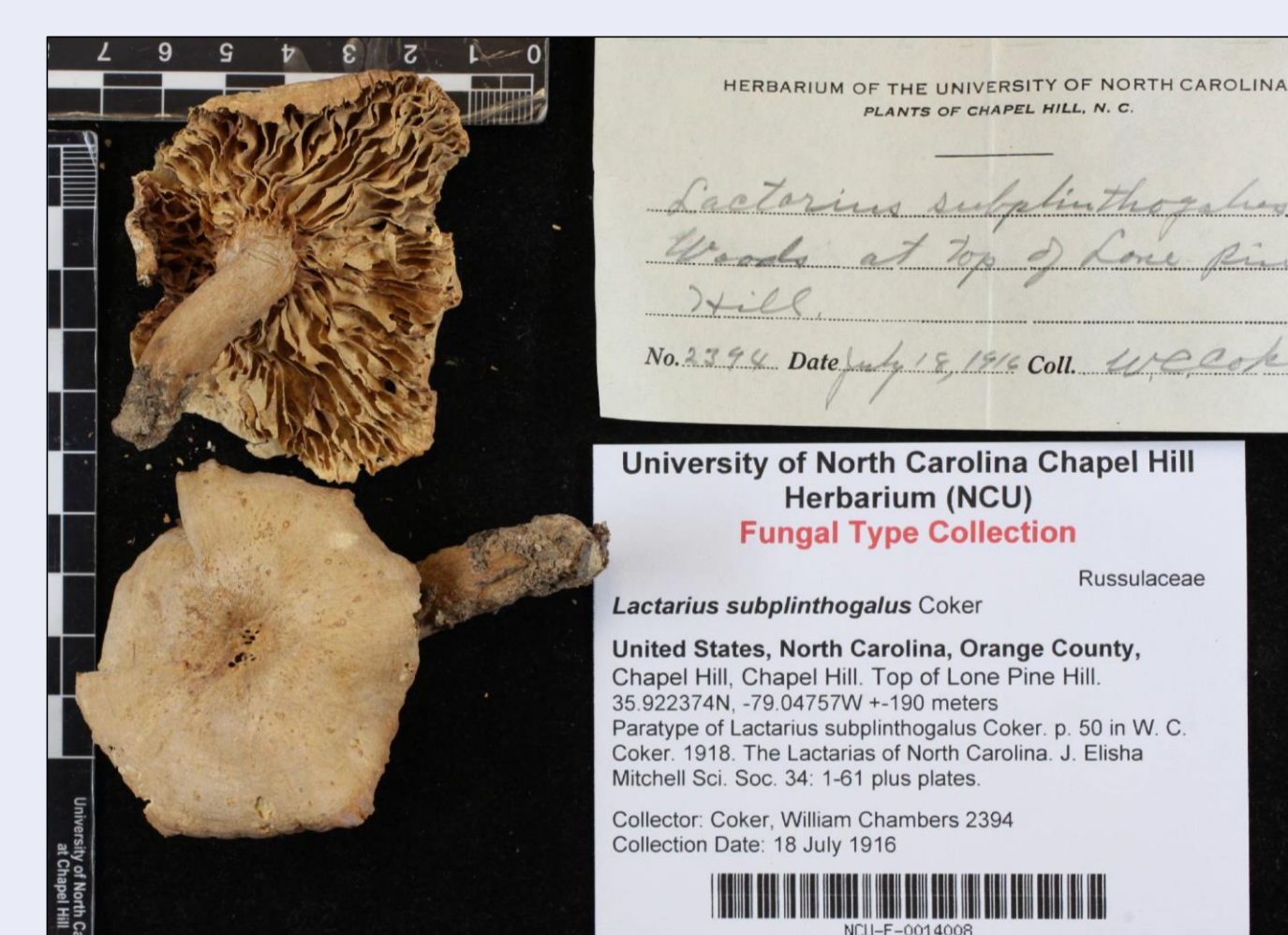
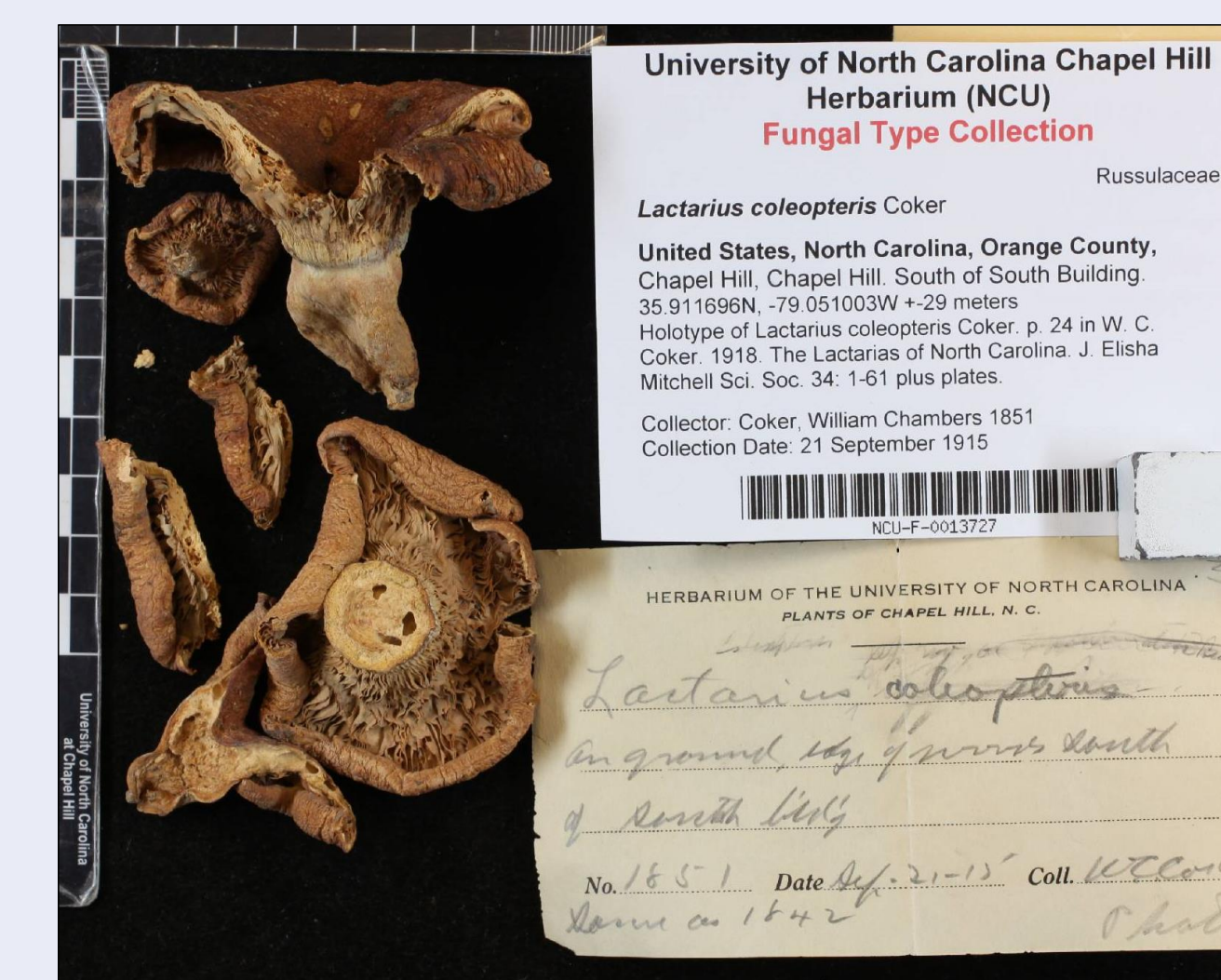
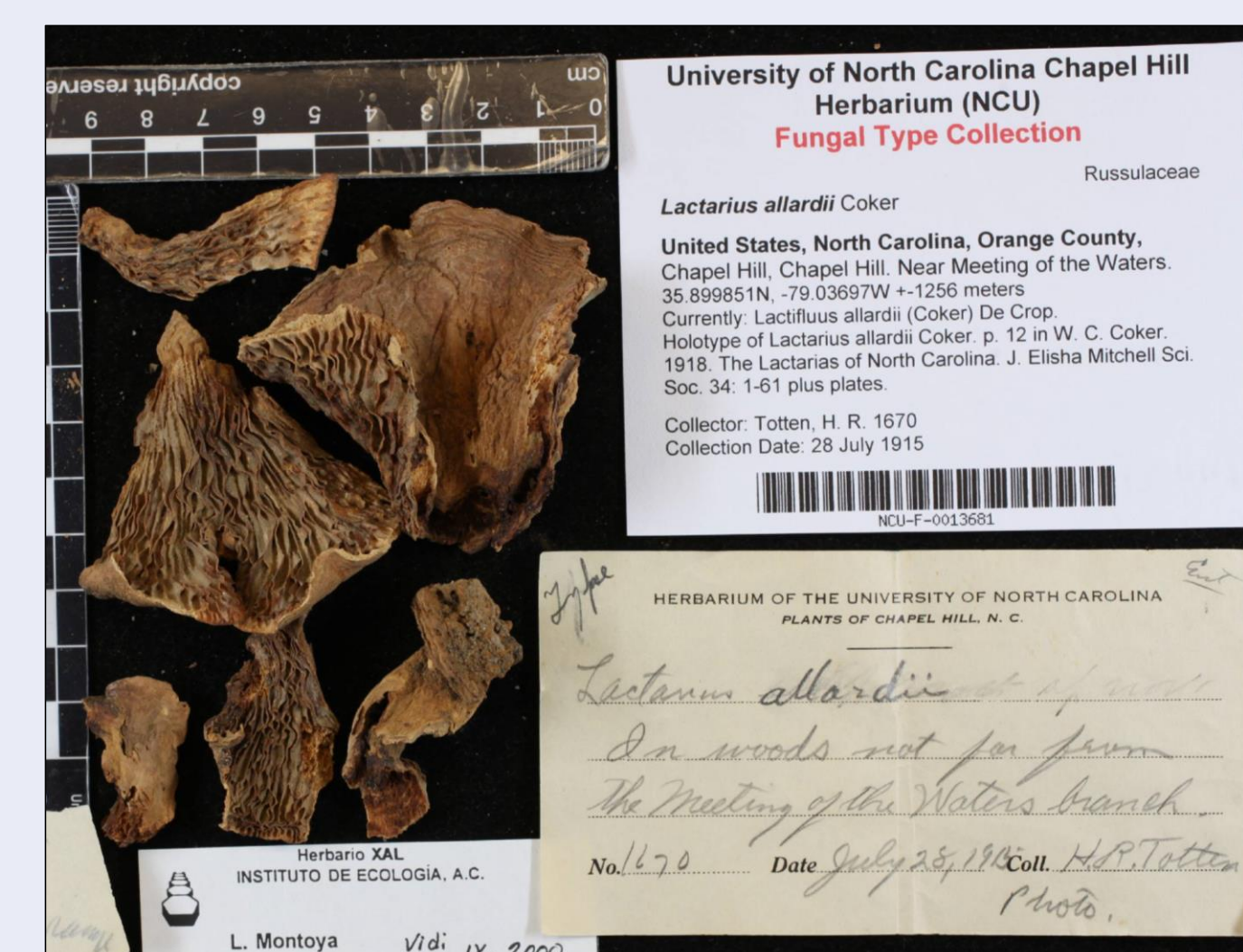
Distribution of NCU *Lactarius s.l.* collections



References

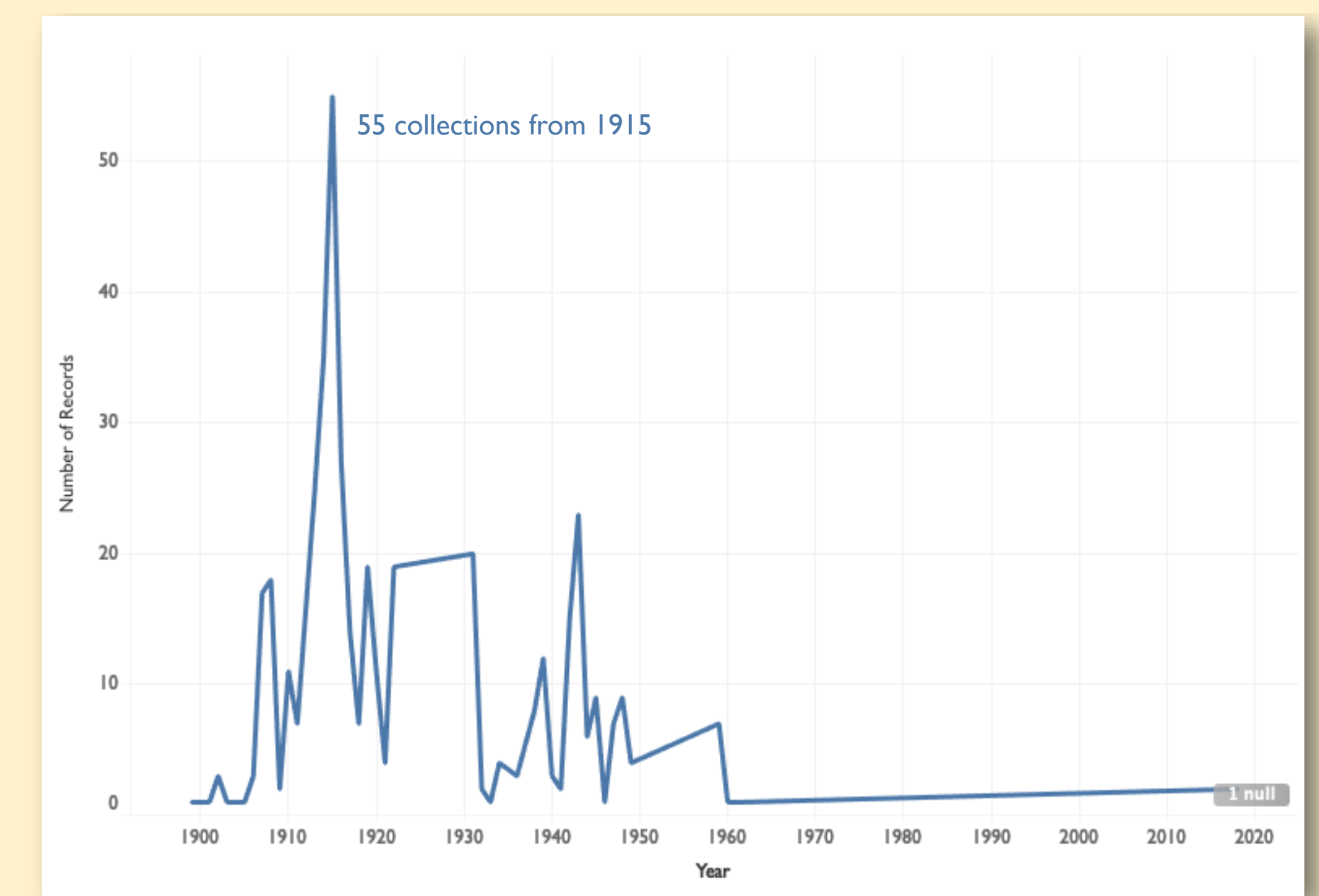
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Continued, far right.



One hundred years later, collection of *Lactarius* has resumed at NCU, with effort focused on type locations.

Timeline of NCU *Lactarius s.l.* collections



References, continued from far left

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